

Editorial

The Global LCA Village

Dear Readers,

Those of you who have recently visited ecomed's website (<http://www.ecomed.de/journals.htm>) will have noticed a new forum "Global LCA Village" beneath that of the "The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment". You may have read the first contribution by Edgar G. Hertwich and William S. Pease [1] which is also published in this issue of the Journal (p. 180-182). It is the purpose of this editorial to explain what we intend with this new feature and how it came about.

The term "Global Village" is a metaphor which has recently often been used to designate the increasing speed of communication brought about by the new electronic media. We understand the new media as to complement (but not replace) the traditional ones, i.e. the print media. True science is international and communication via conferences and journals is an absolutely necessary prerequisite for scientific progress. Before the advent of the new media, we communicated as fast as mail and travel facilities allowed. The new media, however, and especially the Internet offers new possibilities for rapid, worldwide communication. It is the purpose of the new forum to use this advantage for the LCA community, hence the name "Global LCA Village".

The idea to create such a forum came in my mind after the Bordeaux meeting [2] where I met José POTTING (Lyngby) who was invited to act as our Internet Editor, Edgar HERTWICH (Berkeley) and Leanne PHILPOTT (Sydney) and, of course, many other colleagues and old friends being active in the field of LCA. These three persons from three continents especially inspired me to realize the idea of a communication network via the Internet, and suddenly the impressing name was born "Global LCA Village"

How will the forum work? First of all, it will be open for opinion papers, similar to the "Letters to the Editor" which will continue to be published in the Journal. In contrast to the letters which refer to published articles, contributions to the forum can deal with any topic connected with LCA, as long as it is of general interest and/or addresses hot topics. There will be no peer review, the Internet Editor has the last word with regard to the acceptance. Some papers submitted to the forum will also be printed in the Journal if the submitter wants it and the editors decide that the contribution deserves publication. In this respect, I would like to mention that even six issues per year do not offer unlimited space and that opinion papers, as necessary and lively as they may be, can only play a limited role in a scientific journal. The

main emphasis of the Journal is, of course, the publication of peer reviewed manuscripts of the highest possible quality.

There will be no formal board of editors since the main duty of an editorial board, the peer review, is of no relevance for the forum. We, however, hope that an informal, really global network of colleagues can be established. The young colleagues mentioned above may form the nucleus. They have already agreed to co-operate with each other to bring the forum to live. Mrs. Almut Heinrich, the managing editor of the Journal, has installed the technical preconditions at the website. I would like to thank her for this support and for inspiring me to use the possibilities of the new medium. She will also play a key role in the administration of the information flow.

Although the topics to be treated in the "Global LCA Village" will largely depend on its users, on the internet editor and on her personal network, they should also reflect the current state of discussion in the field of LCA. Two topics have emerged in the starting phase: life cycle impact assessment [1] and the interface between natural and political sciences in LCA. As indicated in my editorial of No. 2 of this volume [3], the different components of LCA require different approaches which may range from "hard" or exact science to "softer" or social/political sciences, which depends on goal and scope of an LCA and the decision finding process. In view of the tremendous problems with which mankind is faced, we need a new intellectual culture in which the contours of the different sciences are not removed but which allows a truly interdisciplinary effort.

- [1] HERTWICH, E.G.; PEASE, W.S.: ISO 14042 Restricts Use and Development of Impact Assessment. *Int. J. LCA* 3 (4) 180-182 (1998)
- [2] PHILPOTT, L.: SETAC Bordeaux ~ First Impressions from Down Under. *Int. J. LCA* 3 (1998) 63-64
- [3] KLÖPPER, W.: Subjective is not Arbitrary. *Int. J. LCA* 3 (1998) 61-62

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